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Political Barriers to Information Access



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SLA 1983 Salary Survey Update

In an effort to assist special librarians in salary negotiations, Special Libraries Association conducts an in-depth salary survey every three years. In the intervening years the Association, using a sampling technique, polls 25% of the membership in an effort to provide current salary information. The results provide an overview of the salaries of special librarians and a measure of annual salary increases since the last survey.

The 1983 data updates the overall national and regional salary data reported in the 1982 in-depth triennial salary survey report. While not as comprehensive as the 1982 survey report, the 1983 report indicates general national salary trends, and in conjunction with the 1982 report provides special librarians with guidelines for salary discussions.

During May 1983, a 25% sample of Members and Associate Members received the survey questionnaire.

Questionnaires Mailed	2,334
Questionnaires Returned	1,245(53.3%)
Invalid for Computation	87
Useable Responses	1,158(49.6%)

Table 1 reports the changes in mean and median salaries from April 1, 1982, to April 1, 1983, within each U.S. census region and Canada. The figures present changes in dollar amounts and in percentages.

The survey indicates an overall median salary increase in the U.S. of \$2,000 from \$23,000 in 1982 to \$25,000 in 1983. This represents an 8.7% increase since last year. The overall mean salary reflects a \$2,149 increase from \$24,340 in 1982 to \$26,489 in 1983—an 8.8% increase.

The survey also indicates an overall median salary increase in Canada of \$1,500 from \$27,000 in 1982 to \$28,500 in 1983. This represents a 5.6% increase since last year. The overall mean salary reflects a \$3,440 increase from \$28,113 in 1982 to \$31,553 in 1983—a 12.2% increase.

A comparison with past surveys indicates an increase of 18.9% in the median salaries in the United States over the last two years from \$21,029 in 1981 to \$25,000 in 1983. The 1981 figures also reflect a 17.2% increase in mean salaries

Table 1. 1983 Mean & Median Salaries by Census Region in Rank Order of % Change in Median from 1982 to 1983.

Census Region	Median			Means		
	1982	% of increase (or decrease)	1983	1982	%	1983
New England	\$21,900	16.0%	\$25,400	\$23,064	11.4%	\$25,702
West South Central	\$21,200	13.2%	\$24,000	\$23,432	8.4%	\$25,403
West North Central	\$22,000	9.8%	\$24,150	\$22,369	15.6%	\$25,861
East North Central	\$22,154	9.7%	\$24,300	\$23,688	10.7%	\$26,220
Middle Atlantic	\$23,889	7.7%	\$25,723	\$23,058	20.0%	\$27,669
Mountain	\$20,700	6.9%	\$22,130	\$22,128	3.3%	\$22,850
Pacific	\$24,000	6.2%	\$25,488	\$25,035	4.9%	\$26,272
Canada*	\$27,000	5.6%	\$28,500	\$28,113	12.2%	\$31,553
South Atlantic	\$24,000	5.4%	\$25,300	\$25,584	8.4%	\$27,725
East South Central	\$24,000	(15.6%)	\$20,256	\$24,911	(13.2%)	\$21,636
Overall United States	\$23,000	8.7%	\$25,000	\$24,340	8.8%	\$26,489

* Salaries reported in Canadian dollars. The exchange rate on April 1, 1983, was approximately United States \$1.00 = \$.81 Canadian. The exchange rate on April 1, 1982, was approximately United States \$1.00 = \$.84 Canadian.

Table 2. Salary Distribution by Census Region in Rank Order of 1983 Median.

Census Region	Average Lowest 10%	25th Percen- tile	Percen- tile Median	75th Percen- tile	Average Highest 10%	Mean	No Respon- dents
Canada*	\$19,434	\$25,000	\$28,500	\$38,000	\$48,583	\$31,553	85
Middle Atlantic	\$16,161	\$21,000	\$25,723	\$32,100	\$48,057	\$27,669	271
Pacific	\$15,004	\$21,288	\$25,488	\$30,000	\$42,631	\$26,272	192
New England	\$15,295	\$20,000	\$25,400	\$29,426	\$39,117	\$25,702	73
South Atlantic	\$14,937	\$20,460	\$25,300	\$31,944	\$47,721	\$27,725	160
East North Central	\$15,395	\$20,100	\$24,300	\$30,590	\$45,897	\$26,220	185
West North Central	\$15,676	\$19,966	\$24,150	\$30,000	\$43,686	\$25,861	52
West South Central	\$14,929	\$19,000	\$24,000	\$29,610	\$46,443	\$25,403	79
Mountain	\$13,530	\$19,000	\$22,130	\$25,404	\$36,767	\$22,850	38
East South Central	\$13,701	\$15,600	\$20,256	\$24,500	\$40,193	\$21,636	23
Overall United States	\$15,138	\$20,052	\$25,000	\$30,590	\$45,721	\$26,489	1,073

* See footnote to Table 1.

for the United States from \$22,603 in 1981 to \$26,489 in 1983.

Comparison with past surveys indicates an increase of 21.3% in the median salaries in Canada over the last two years from \$23,500 in 1981 to \$28,500 in 1983. The 1981 figures also reflect a 26.2% increase in mean salaries for Canada from \$25,000 in 1981 to \$31,553 in 1983.

All regions except the East South Central indicate median salary increases ranging from 16.0% to 5.4%, and mean salary increases ranging from 20.0% to 3.3% above 1982 figures. The East South Central Region has shown a median decrease of 15.6% and a mean decrease of 13.2% from April 1982 to April 1983.

Table 2 lists the salary distribution in rank order of 1983 median salaries for Canada and the nine United States census regions. In comparing the rankings with the 1982 triennial salary survey, the two regions with the greatest change are the East South Central region, which moved down from four to

ter., and New England, which moved up from eight to four. The Middle Atlantic region and the South Atlantic region reversed places in the second and fifth positions with the Middle Atlantic ending up second on the list. Four of the regions—Pacific, East North Central, West North Central, and Canada—remained in the same position between 1982 and 1983. The remaining regions—West South Central and Mountain—both moved up one position.

This survey included questions to attempt to define the number of respondents unemployed and the period of unemployment during a 12-month period. Of the 1,245 valid responses, 108 (8.7%) were unemployed for at least a portion of the period between April 1, 1982, and April 1, 1983. The Canadian responses show a lower unemployment rate of 4.7% while United States responses show a rate of 9.9%. The time of unemployment averaged four months; termination was initiated by the respondent in 59% of the cases and by the employer in 41%.